



PRESS RELEASE

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FLORIDA MAN CONVICTED IN DEADLY ARIZONA ALIEN SMUGGLING ATTEMPT

PHOENIX, ARIZONA -- The United States Attorney's Office announced today that FRANCISCO VASQUEZ-TORRES, DOB 10/8/55, of Lake Placid, Florida, was convicted by a jury in Phoenix, Arizona, on Count One of the Indictment and acquitted on Count Two of the Indictment. VASQUEZ-TORRES had been indicted September 12, 2001, and was arrested on November 1, 2001, in Lake Placid, by the United States Border Patrol, in connection with the alien smuggling incident near Yuma, Arizona in which 14 of 26 Mexican nationals died in the Arizona desert.

Count one of the Indictment alleged conspiracy to bring to the United States for the purpose of commercial advantage or private financial gain certain persons, knowing that said persons were aliens, at a place other than a designated port of entry and at a place other than as designated by the Commissioner of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, which resulted in the death of one or more persons, in violation of Title 8, United States Code, Section 1324(a)(1)(A)(i), (a)(1)(A)(v)(I) and (a)(1)(B)(i) and (iv).

(MORE)

Count One carries a maximum penalty of life imprisonment, up to five years supervised release, and a fine of up to \$250,000. Sentencing is set for September 23, 2002, at 3:30 P.M. before the Honorable Earl H. Carroll, United States District Judge.

Concerning this same alien smuggling attempt, a 20 year old man from Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico, JESUS LOPEZ-RAMOS, pled guilty in federal court in Phoenix on October 18, 2001, to twenty-five felony counts charging him with alien smuggling resulting in the deaths of fourteen illegal immigrants and serious bodily injury to eleven others. LOPEZ-RAMOS had been indicted on May30, 2001, in connection with the failed attempt to smuggle the group of undocumented Mexican citizens into the United States near the international border near Lukeville, Arizona. LOPEZ-RAMOS was sentenced to 16 years in prison.

This case was investigated by the United States Border Patrol and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, together with the Yuma and Pima County Sheriff's Offices. The case was tried by Tom Simon, Assistant United States Attorney.

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